

Why three is the magic number when it comes to business presentations

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If you work in recruitment, the chances are you are going to have to do a presentation sooner or later. If the thought of composing something from scratch strikes you with fear, then here is some advice that will make every presentation you create much simpler to master.

It's called 'the power of three'. The word 'power' is very apt. When you are making a presentation – whether it's a pitch to a potential new client or updating your colleagues – the power of three provides an almost magical structure to ensure you deliver just the right amount of information. It's the reason there's three wise men, three musketeers, as well as three little pigs!

Think of it as a sandwich. Your content – your actual presentation – will be up to you. But by putting the power of three to work for you, you will have a very robust structure that is simple to follow, and helps package your information into a format your audience can readily take in.

To get started, first identify the main points you want to convey in your presentation – think of this as the 'bacon, lettuce and tomato' in your 'presentation sandwich'. You may have five or 10 points, but there may be some overlap. So group them into themes. Then eliminate the weakest ones, and whittle the list down to your three strongest or most important points.

State your first point and support it with an example or a story. Then move on to the next one, and repeat. Before you know it, you will have a well-structured presentation based around three powerful points.

For best results, wrap your three points between an introduction and a conclusion. This is the bread that holds your filling together. Opening with an introduction will put your audience at ease. Tell them what they can expect to take away from your talk. This will motivate them to listen and help them relax and know they are in good hands. Tell them you have three main points you will make. Now primed for what to expect, they can listen to your presentation's main points, and follow each one. Conclude by summarising your three points at the end.

Armed with the power of three you now have a format you can rely upon again and again, for presentations of any length. Having a go-to structure to apply to your content will help ease the pain of making presentations. Your audience will find them easier to follow, and you may even find that you start to enjoy doing them.

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